

# REGULAR MEETING of the ROSS TOWN COUNCIL

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024

*Held In-Person and Teleconference via Zoom*

**1. 6:00 p.m. Commencement.**

Mayor Bill Kircher, Jr.; Mayor Pro Tem Julie McMillan; Council Members Teri Dowling; Elizabeth Robbins; Mathew Salter; Town Manager Christa Johnson; Town Attorney Ben Stock.

**2. Posting of agenda/changes to agenda.**

Town Manager Johnson reported that the agenda was posted according to government requirements.

**3. Open Time for Public Expression.**

None.

**4. Presentation of 5-year service award to Zachary Baker.**

Mr. Anthony Alcozer of the Public Works Department described Zachary Baker's service with the Town, his great road and maintenance work, experience, qualities, and said he is a great team member for the Town of Ross. He then presented Mr. Baker with a 5-year service award, and a round of applause and pictures followed.

**5. a. Introduction and swearing in of new police officer, Giovanni Linares Henriquez. (Pata)**

Police Chief Pata introduced Ross's new Police Officer Giovanni Linares Henriquez, his parents visiting from Sweden, and his wife, Vanessa. Chief Pata described his educational pursuits and experience and performed the Oath of Office to Officer Linares Henriquez. A round of applause followed, and Mayor Kircher and Council Members welcomed Officer Linares Henriquez to the Town of Ross.

**b. Introduction of new Recreation Coordinator, Wyatt Mann. (Borthwick)**

Recreation Manager Maureen Borthwick introduced the new Recreation Coordinator, Wyatt Mann. She provided an overview of their interview process, his educational background, experience with various recreation programs, and she welcomed Mr. Mann to the Town of Ross.

Mayor Kircher and Council Members welcomed Wyatt Mann to the City of Ross, and a round of applause followed.

Mr. Mann then provided introductory comments, said he grew up in the Bay Area and was influenced by focused recreation programs, and thanked the Town staff and Council.

## **6. Mayor's Report.**

Halloween typically marks the beginning of the holiday season, and this year Shady Lane residents once again created a dazzling display with their creative and spooky decorations, much to the delight of the many trick-or-treaters and their families. This was followed on November 7 by the Ross Turkey Trot, which featured 5k and 10k races, a 1-mile Stroller and Youth event, and the popular Toddler Dash.

Last year, and after extensive public outreach, the Town Council approved a Master Facilities plan for reconstruction of our aging and largely obsolete public safety and administration buildings. The plan was based on the assumption that our fire station would close in July of 2025, with our firefighters and engine transferred to other stations in the Ross Valley Fire Department, and that the paramedics would remain to insure an adequate response time in medical emergencies.

Paramedic services are provided by Ross Valley Paramedic Authority by paramedics who in turn operate two ambulances, one of which has been stationed in Ross for the past 40 years, with the other located in Corte Madera.

Before proceeding to detailed construction planning, the Council requested late last year that the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority enter into a long-term lease for the Ross station to assure the continued presence of the paramedic facility in Ross.

The Board of the Paramedic Authority decided to conduct a deployment study before acting on Ross's request, and we were led to believe that this would be completed in the March 2024 timeframe. Then the City Manager of Larkspur raised the possibility of Larkspur and Corte Madera withdrawing from the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority altogether, a development which if it were to occur could threaten the continued existence of the Paramedic Authority itself.

With these issues still up in the air and the deadline for closing our fire station looming, last month the Council authorized our Town Manager to send a letter to the Ross Valley Fire Board requesting that the closing of the Ross Fire Station be extended for one year to allow time to resolve issues concerning future provision of emergency medical services in Ross and other affected communities.

The study commissioned by the Paramedic Authority was finally completed in November. On the positive side, the completed study did confirm that Ross remains the best location for the paramedics to be stationed. But the study also highlighted issues relating to the continuing viability of the Paramedic Authority and recommended revising and strengthening the Paramedic Authority's joint powers agreement, with Larkspur and Corte Madera committing to remain a part of the authority. Obviously, this is complicated and will take a considerable amount of time to negotiate, with the outcome still very uncertain.



The board of the Paramedic Authority next meets on November 21, and our request for an extension of the deadline for closing our fire station is still pending before the board of the Ross Valley Fire Department.

In other words, and as always, we have our work cut out for us. Enjoy your Thanksgiving and be sure to mark your calendars for Winterfest on December 7.

**7. Council Committee & Liaison Reports.**

Council Member Dowling reported on her attendance at the TAM meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup> and highlighted the successful launch of the bike sharing program, possible new parking options for the Larkspur Ferry, evaluation of Measure A expenditures, and Age Friendly Ross's third annual Valentine's Luncheon on February 13<sup>th</sup> to celebrate older Ross residents at the Marin Art and Garden Center.

Mayor Kircher said he previously summarized his attendance at the RVPA meeting in his Mayor's Report which is continued consideration of the Council's letter to the next meeting, or after December 5<sup>th</sup>.

**8. Presentation Regarding Safe Routes to School.**

Police Chief Pata introduced David Rice, Superintendent, Ross School District and said this is their presentation on Safe Routes to School highlighting what they did last year and this year. Also participating in Safe Routes to School Task Force is the Town Manager, Council Member Salter, and the Public Works Director. It is all about making sure kids get to school safe, the Town is addressing traffic concerns, and other items. Their first meeting was August 12<sup>th</sup> where they talked about solutions for the coming year, to continue with programs that are working, and participate in the ride and walk to school events hosted by Safe Routes to School.

David Rice, Superintendent reported a ride and walk to school event was held today to remember Ruby Bridges, and everyone wore purple.

Chief Pata said Public Works Director Simonitch will describe work done on Laurel Grove which has been supported by Safe Routes to School, and staff has been working on the Winship stop sign area and have made some progress with issuance of citations and education of students. He recognized Superintendent Rice regarding E-bikes and what has been done.

Superintendent Rice said the E-bike issue came up with Superintendents all over Marin County and he and Chief Pata developed a letter which was sent out to the community with the request that Class 2 and 3 bikes could not be parked on campus during school hours. The manufacturers recommend that no one under 16 ride the bikes, and Ross School has K-8 graders so no 16-year-olds. Kids are educated first and then the police may get punitive, but this is why the relationship between the police department and school is so strong.

Lastly, Chief Pata said the Council approved reducing the speed limit around Ross schools. Schools have been responsive and supportive, and he thanked the Council and staff.

Superintendent Rice also thanked the Council and said he is worried most with bicycle commuters and adults coming through and down Shady Lane as they head to the ferry in the morning. Chief Pata agreed and noted that there are also older kids going to Archie Williams or Redwood.

Council Members voiced appreciation for the management of the E-bike issues, suggested future improved markings on the roads to improve safety, thanked the Chief for greeting kids, and confirmed the 15 mph signs will be posted soon.

Mayor Kircher opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

## **9. Staff & Community Reports.**

### **a. Town Manager**

Town Manager Johnson added onto the Mayor's thanks to all sponsors, participants, volunteers, and Town staff for their contribution towards the success of the 2024 Ross Turkey Trot which was held last Sunday, and she said she won for Best Costume. There were 273 registered participants and over 30 volunteers from the middle and high schools. It had a one-mile family fun run, a 5-K road race, 10-K road/trail race, and a kid's zone with a bounce house, crafts, and a toddler dash on the Ross Common. Prizes were awarded to the male and female victors of the 5-K and 10-K and trophies were given out to the best costumes in all three sub-events. In the words of one participant, "It was a perfect way to kick off the holiday season." She credited Recreation staff and noted the idea began last year with the Ross Auxiliary and families in town.

She reported this past Tuesday afternoon that the Town's management team and key employees participated in a tabletop exercise designed specifically for Ross by Chief Pata and the County of Marin's Office of Emergency Management. It was extremely beneficial for staff to walk through a flooding scenario and how staff would work with partner agencies to respond step by step. They have a lot of follow-up and training to do, but it was a great step in the right direction. She thanked Chief Pata, staff, and Steven Torrence, Director of the Marin County Office of Emergency Management and his team.

Public Works Director Rich Simonitch then reported on traffic safety on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, the Laurel Grove pathway, and intersections in that area, stating earlier this year Council requested to consider a traffic signal at Winship and Sir Francis Drake. A traffic consultant performed a traffic signal warrant study which found that a signal is not warranted for several reasons at that location. However, they offered recommendations for safety measures on Sir Francis Drake in lieu of a signal. Those recommendations included some tree trimming, improved signage and pavement markings, and periodic traffic monitoring, which he described.



Council Members thanked Mr. Simonitch for all the work and asked to further identify areas in town which could improve safety in crosswalks, with markings, lighting, etc., and given the recent Winship fatality, asked that he look at other areas where they could improve safety with crosswalks, markings, lighting, etc. throughout town. Council also inquired about a speed flasher to be located on Sir Francis Drake when driving west between Camino Bueno and the first Winship, and Mr. Simonitch agreed to review these.

Mayor Kircher opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

**b. Ross Property Owners Association**

No report.

**10. Consent Agenda**

The following items will be considered in a single motion, unless removed from the Consent Agenda.

**Mayor Pro Tem McMillan moved and Council Member Dowling seconded, to approve Consent Calendar Items a, b, c, d, e, and f. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

- a. **Minutes: Special Meeting Closed Session, October 9, 2024  
Minutes: Special Meeting Closed Session, October 10, 2024  
Minutes: Regular Meeting, October 10, 2024**
- b. **Demands for October 2024.**
- c. **Town Council to waive the second reading, read by title only, and adopt Ordinance No. 727 amending Ross Municipal Code (RMC) Chapter 18.42 - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to comply with updates to State Law regarding Accessory Dwelling Units and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units, as introduced at the October 10, 2024 Council meeting.**
- d. **Town Council to accept the Investment Report for the three-month period ended September 30, 2024**
- e. **Town Council to review and accept the fiscal year 2024-25 first quarter, three-month, Financial Summary Report.**
- f. **Town Council to adopt Resolution No. 2436 accepting the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2024 Annual Report on Development Impact Fees (AB 1600 Report)**

**End of Consent Agenda.**

**11. Public Hearings on Planning Projects – Part 1.**

**a. 160 Lagunitas Road, Design Review and Town Council adoption of Resolution No. 2437 approving the project, subject to conditions.**

AJ and Melissa Rhode, 160 Lagunitas Road, A.P. No. 073-201-07, Zoning: R-1: B-A, General Plan: VL (Very Low Density), Flood Zone: X (Moderate to Low Risk).

**Project Summary:** The applicant requests approval for Design Review. The project proposes constructing a new 66-ft x 33-ft (2,178 square-foot) sports court with a 10-ft high glass wall and a thin steel frame. The new sports court surface will be made of artificial turf and will blend with the landscape. The sports court is situated in the front yard of the property, outside of the setback and away from the main house. The court will be well screened from the road, as it will be extremely surrounded by hedges on all sides.

Assistant Planner Alex Lopez-Vega gave the staff report and overview of the request for Design Review and Town Council adoption of Resolution No. 2437 approving a project at 160 Lagunitas Road. The ADR group reviewed the proposal on October 15<sup>th</sup>, supported the design of the project and highlighted that the court's permeable surface is of significant benefit. He said staff recommends the Council adopt Resolution No. 2437 approving design review.

Steven Sutro, Sutro Architects, said he was available for questions of the Council.

Mayor Kircher confirmed there were no Council Member questions. He opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

**Council Member Robbins moved and Council Member Dowling seconded, to adopt Resolution No. 2437 approving 160 Lagunitas Road Design Review. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

**End of Public Hearings on Planning Projects - Part 1.**

**Administrative Agenda.**

**12. Finance Subcommittee recommends the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to retain Aaron Bonck, Vice President, Time Value Investments, as an investment advisor that is experienced in public agency treasury management in California.**

Town Manager Johnson gave the staff report and overview of the request by Mayor Pro Tem McMillan and Council Member Salter, stating the Town's investment program is governed by its investment policy which is reviewed and adopted by the Town Council annually. The policy states the Town's funds shall be invested in compliance with all applicable Town municipal codes, California State statutes, federal regulations, and in a manner designed to accomplish objectives, which she described.



Over the years, the Town's portfolio has been primarily invested in the Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) managed by the State of California's Controller. While these investments have met the Council's investment policy objectives and have required a modest amount of staff time to manage, there may be an opportunity to achieve higher investment returns with the assistance of an experienced investment advisor.

During the June 28, 2024 Finance Subcommittee meeting, the idea of retaining an investment professional experienced in public agency treasury management in California was discussed. On August 5, 2024 the subcommittee received presentations from two firms regarding their services. The subcommittee agreed that Mr. Aaron Bonck of Time Value Investments (TVI) would best serve the Town's investment advisory needs.

The subcommittee recommends that the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to retain Mr. Bonck as an investment advisor that is experience in public agency treasury management in California. Mr. Bonck is available via Zoom and she introduced him.

Aaron Bonck, Time Value Investments, provided background on their firm, described his experience with over 100 public entities in California and other states, his Chartered Finance Analyst designation from the CFA Institute, their focus on 98% of various public entities, attendance and participation with organizational conferences and session presentations, priorities for public entities of safety, liquidity and yield, and meeting these standards on investments they seek to provide. They provide U.S. government bonds and federally insured CD's which have a high level of safety. He would work with the Town Manager to ensure all liquidity needs are met, ensure investments have liquidity, and that the Town is able to access funds. In terms of yield, they seek to find the highest options that can offer the Town the best rate of return and provide certainty and balance with ups and downs.

Regarding compensation for services, Mr. Bonck said the relationship would be for them to work with the Town in a brokerage capacity where there would be no set on-going fee and their compensation would be transactional, built into the purchase price, and factored into the yield of any bond or CD they offer, which is common.

Mayor Pro Tem McMillan said she is a member of the Finance Subcommittee and wondered if Mr. Bonck could do a comparison of the LAIF return versus some of the CDs minus their firm's compensation to underscore why it is prudent to put some monies into these non-LAIF vehicles.

Mr. Bonck then presented and described a graph illustrating the potential returns for a portion of the funds they would manage.

Mayor Pro Tem McMillan asked and confirmed the investments are more like things parked in the Town's capital funds. Mr. Bonck said he will work with the Town Manager to review and identify the cash balances and where they have been over time and then isolate funds that the Town has never had to dip into and does not expect to dip into going forward. They structure the portfolio to help minimize any chance the Town could lose money if it did have to sell a security earlier.

Mayor Pro Tem McMillan asked if there is a statutory limit as to how much money the Town can invest in this type of vehicle. Mr. Bonck replied there is a 30% limitation on the CDs and the Town has about \$20 million in, so they could do up to \$6 million of total funds in CDs. There is no limitation in Treasury and other government bonds.

Town Manager Johnson added that the quarterly investment report was on the Consent Calendar and it provides a \$20 million figure of funds they have now. The Council set up an emergency fund of \$1.5 million that has never been touched and this is an example of what could be invested with TVI. Another example is the Town also has \$2 million in an account from property owners on their projects, so they need to make sure these monies are available to pay back when their projects are finalized.

Council Member Salter asked and confirmed the commission on government bonds is typically 5 to 10 basis points and the yield they would show to the Town would be a net yield the Town is earning. He also described their investment with CDs versus CDARs and the Town owns the CD in the bank, and noted everything is done at the Town's discretion.

Mayor Pro Tem McMillan said if the Town were to retain Mr. Bonck, she asked and confirmed the Town Manager has already been delegated authority annually in the Town's investment policy. Town Manager Johnson said she brought this tonight because it is different from what has been done for many years. If the Council wishes to move forward tonight, she will work with Mr. Bonck and review an amount for investment. She can bring this to the Finance Subcommittee or could also provide an update twice a year where Mr. Bonck could present to the Finance Subcommittee.

Mayor Pro Tem McMillan said the update twice annually would work well and did not want to micro-manage this.

Mayor Kircher asked if this is essentially a discretionary account the firm would control as to which instruments to buy, timing, and whatever Mr. Bonck thinks is best with the Town simply directing him as to what their needs might be. Or he asked if this is a situation where he would alert the Town Manager of a great bond and what she would think.



Mr. Bonck explained this would be a non-discretionary relationship. For the most part, the industry standard for public entities is to work with any broker or investment advisor on a non-discretionary basis given the nature of the funds. He will come with recommendations when there are funds available. They would not make any decisions to invest or re-invest any maturing funds without expressed consent from the Town Manager, and typically he would make contact once a quarter, every six months, or even once a year when there is activity.

Mayor Kircher referred to doing this on a commission basis given it is the most economical. He asked what other alternatives are available such as funds under management, or a fixed fee.

Mr. Bonck said if the Town hired them as an official investment advisor, under that relationship there is a contract in place for a set fee agreed upon or a percentage of funds invested so a brokerage relationship makes sense. The fee they would charge if they were to go the investment advisor route is something like 10 basis points, so there is not a huge difference in cost between the two, as well as the service provided.

Mayor Kircher asked when making decisions on investments, he asked and confirmed with Mr. Bonck they will exercise judgment about what their firm thinks will happen with interest rates and the economy. Mr. Bonck added that they stay in tune with the market and factor this into their recommendations.

Mayor Kircher opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

Town Manager Johnson asked for clarification in the recommendation which states, "The Finance Subcommittee recommends the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to retain Aaron Bonck as an investment advisor." She suggested changing this to state, "...retain Aaron Bonck as an investment broker." Mr. Bonck also confirmed he is licensed to provide both investment advisory services and brokerage services.

Council Members voiced support to retain Time Value Investments as the Town's investment broker, confirmed the Council would still be receiving quarterly investment reports along with the LAIF report and other investments, and these could be included as a 6-month and then annual reporting.

**Council Member Robbins moved and Council Member Dowling seconded, to authorize the Town Manager to retain Aaron Bonck, Vice President, Time Value Investments, as an investment broker. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

**13. Town Council to discuss the potential installation of public safety cameras in the Town of Ross for the purpose of capturing images of license plates and vehicles.**

Police Chief Pata gave an overview of the Council's consideration to install public safety cameras in the Town for the purpose of capturing images of license plates and vehicles. He provided a background of the cameras, research and data gathered on cameras, two main vendors; Flock Public Safety and Vigilant. He introduced Kristen McCloud from Flock Safety.

Kristen McCloud, Community Engagement Manager, Flock Safety, provided an overview of their company with the focus on their company's automatic license plate reading technology, presented the camera called the Falcon which would be mounted either on an existing pole or a Flock pole. They are solar powered, stationary, motion activated and capture a still image of the rear of a vehicle. Law enforcement will receive real time alerts from the National Crime Information Center on wanted or suspect vehicles as well as the National Center for missing and exploited children or Amber alerts.

Additionally, they can receive alerts from custom lists to alert quickly on wanted vehicles. The footage is owned by the Town and department and will never be sold or shared by Flock. It is stored securely on the Cloud and encrypted end to end. The Flock system requires a search reason and a user number which is saved indefinitely which creates an audit trail so administrators can ensure the system is being used in accordance with department policy. She then provided an example of the City of San Rafael's system and how it is utilized and said they work with over 400 law enforcement agencies throughout California.

Police Chief Pata said the cameras need to be placed in the right location and he described areas of ingress in order to prevent crime, and he provided an example of the robbery in town. The cameras are also used for someone driving that may have dementia and not able to find their way home which helps locate where the vehicle was last. He described information he attached to the staff report, as well as sample policies, and was available to answer questions.

Mayor Pro Tem McMillan said she noticed there is only one camera for Winship Park but it has two other entrances and exits. She believes San Anselmo may be looking into this and possibly they could be responsible for one of those cameras on Barber, but it would be helpful to have a camera on all three of those areas. Police Chief Pata asked and confirmed they would have to drive on Sir Francis Drake to get to the park, and noted there will be a camera at the Town limits facing that area, but he would need to consider all potential locations.

Council Member Salter questioned deterrence and how criminals know if a Flock system is there and how it deters crime. Ms. McCloud said when cameras are in the community and a stolen vehicle passes by a camera and that person is apprehended, often times those apprehended talk with each other and news spreads quickly. She then described their ability to reduce the number of stolen vehicles by 25%. She also described the ability to alert police within seconds if a stolen vehicle is identified by a camera.



Ms. McCloud added that Flock also has technology called Vehicle Fingerprint technology, so if a crime were to occur and there was a witness in the area, if a witness can provide a vehicle description and possibly a license plate number, this is all information officers can filter in the system to narrow down potential vehicles to help the investigation move faster.

Town Manager Johnson said if cameras are installed and are hit by vehicles or vandalized, she asked if the responsibility is on Flock to repair or replace them. Ms. McCloud said if the camera is damaged as a result of vandalism or theft, this would be the Town's responsibility. Total replacement of a camera would be \$800. Their cameras are about \$3,000 per camera per year, with one time installation costs, but if there is anything wrong with the cameras and hardware, this is the company's responsibility.

Council Member Robbins asked if there are areas where police would want a surveillance camera or she asked if they were limiting this to just license plate reader cameras.

Chief Pata said he is recommending license plate reader cameras. They work well and surveillance cameras create new issues that police might not be prepared for. The upside is that this is older technology and already tested a lot in this county. So, any bugs or problems have already been worked out.

Council Member Salter asked if a surveillance camera is something to consider in the future, and Chief Pata said he was not sure and would like to give it more thought.

Council Member Dowling asked and confirmed this item is not budgeted at this time; however, there are reserve funds and this is what would be requested of the Council for an appropriation. On an on-going basis, it would need to be included in the budget and go to the Council for annual approval. The Town can start out with a pilot program. She voiced support of the cameras as a pilot program for 8 cameras, which is the Chief's recommendation.

Council Members voiced support for the pilot program.

Mayor Kircher opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

There was Council consensus and direction to staff to approve the pilot program for 8 cameras and, based upon how the pilot goes, they can determine if more cameras would be needed in the future.

**14. Town Council to discuss and provide direction to staff on the potential restoration of the Ross Common playfield.**

Public Works Director Simonitch gave a PowerPoint presentation and overview on the potential restoration of the Ross Common playfield. He explained that in July, staff met with members of

the RPOA to discuss a restoration program for the Ross Common. The item is not currently budgeted and originally hoped that the costs would come in around \$50,000 to \$60,000 for the field.

Mr. Simonitch gave background of the renovation of the Ross School in 2011, requiring relocating portables onto the Ross Common playing field and post-construction restoration lacked a comprehensive plan with little follow-up and debris from the construction caused damage to certain locations of the playing field.

In 2017, a 5,000-gallon storage tank was installed increasing irrigation storage by 50% but they found the wells were not filling the tanks to keep up with the irrigation cycle. In 2021, the Town hired a contractor to clean and rehabilitate the irrigation wells and replace sprinkler heads which improved irrigation capacity by 20%. In December 2021, the Town adopted the landscape master plan which vetted restoration of the Common as a popular project, with cost estimated between \$600,000 and \$800,000 and more for complete restoration of the playing field.

He described the continued constrained facilities budget, presented photos of the damaged field from 2014, 2018, and 2024, showing initial damage, some improvement, and irrigation work with some turf areas coming back and some areas not responding to treatment.

Contractor proposals came in at \$250,000 to \$300,000 just to restore one-third of the field as a pilot program. The drawbacks of not taking on the entire project are that segregating one-third of the field requires constructing a bypass at the irrigation system. Also, dividing the restoration of turf into multiple phases impacts the economy of scale and savings realized, and most important, dividing the restoration of the turf into different sections over different fiscal years would leave a patchwork effect.

Tonight, staff seeks input from the Council on how to proceed. They could defer the project to the future budget and review it then, move forward with this limited scope project pending contributions from RPOA and other sources to provide sufficient funding and take it to public bid.

Council Member Salter asked what is driving the \$250,000 cost. Mr. Simonitch said it is labor and heavy equipment to remove the 4-6" of turf and restore the irrigation, as well as excavation of 2-½ acres. The costs do not consider prevailing wage which is high, as well as restoration.

Mayor Pro Tem McMillan said it seems most of the area in need of repair is directly attributable to the school renovation and portables being put on that area. She asked what percentage of the repair is necessary because of the school renovation. Mr. Simonitch said it is about 40% to 50% of the field being impacted by the construction at the high end and possibly 30% at the low end. However, it is an old field that has not had renovation or restoration in at least 50-60 years.



Councilmember Dowling asked if the school has any responsibility for the field or just the Town. Mr. Simonitch said it is a mixture of both. The maintenance contract is divided between the Town and the school on a certain percentage basis, but he would have to ask the school on their thoughts regarding contributing monies to restore what is Town property, and said the full field would cost closer to \$800,000 to \$1 million.

Council Member discussion then ensued regarding benefits of splitting the project into two segments so children could use one field, the cost-effectiveness of doing the entire project, contributions from RPOA and the school, and the projected timeline for completion of two to three months during the summer.

Mayor Kircher opened the public comment period.

Jeff Koblick, RPOA, said some members who have children at the school initiated this project and the primary problem is the field most adjacent to the school. A big part of it is drainage which he pointed out and described from the slide. The other part of it was the area is pretty compacted with gravel and residuals from construction. He recommended getting this section cleaned up right now because on rainy days, kids must play on the asphalt. He spoke with the Ross School PTO president who told him they raise funding but do not have discretion of where its spent. There was pushback from the Superintendent but the RPOA will contribute and look at this as one of their major fundings of up to \$50,000. This is the area that needs immediate attention and most impacts the kids at the school.

In terms of the rest of the field, he would urge the Council to look at the Basich Field and Ross's field. They seem to have done a good job of maintaining that field. It has lots of activity on it all year long. It has good drainage and so they should start with that, layer in good soil which promotes drainage, and urged the Council to budget money.

Mayor Pro Tem McMillan said she thought they were going to do a fund a need at the Ross School auction for the field, and Mr. Koblick said this was the initial thinking, but the Superintendent pushed back on that and wanted to allocate it to other things.

Council Member Dowling asked if the RPOA might be interested in increasing the amount, maybe \$50,000 this year and \$50,000 next year. Mr. Koblick said they can try to raise more money. He thinks what the parents are saying is they want some portion of the field available to play on at all times, so they would prefer it be done in segments.

Council Member discussion ensued regarding support for getting the project done all at once which would result in savings, fundraising, the restoration not being done effectively and without funding, damage caused by the school, the Town's priority for facilities renovation, and working on the project in stages.

Town Manager Johnson clarified that she brought this forward to the Council as a concept because normally they would do it during the budget process and discuss the other infrastructure needs in town. She was encouraged to bring this forward because community members involved with the school especially indicated they were hopeful they could raise a lot of money for it. They have backed away from that since and also cited demands on the Public Works Director.

Council Member Salter voiced a strong desire to have the work done, believed money was being wasted on maintenance, and supported fundraising efforts.

Mr. Simonitch described ways of solving drainage issues and potentially funding some of the drainage work through the drainage fund, and this could be considered during the budget process.

Mayor Kircher asked what the scope of the drainage part might be as opposed to everything else. Mr. Simonitch said part of the drainage could be some regrading of that area to lift it up, put in catch basins at low areas, and they would then need to resod the construction area after regrading. Another culvert would need to be discussed during budget discussions with the Council.

Council Member Dowling asked if the \$100,000 would be part of the \$800,000 for the entire project. Mr. Simonitch said yes, to some extent. It is a drainage project and they are not conditioning the soil. It is going to look like a patchwork type of project, but this will fix the drainage problems.

Council Members recommended using drainage funds to fix drainage and to work with RPOA and the school for contributions and fundraising.

Mr. Simonitch agreed the Town could get the drainage work done first as discussed in the budget process, and then determine the status of fundraising, and monies from the RPOA and school.

Town Manager Johnson added that it is very important to make sure they are using the drainage fund for the appropriate purpose. She therefore would like to work with Mr. Simonitch and legal staff to ensure this is done right. Also, they spent money, time, and Council time on approving a master drainage plan a year ago, and this project was not in it. They had consultants look at the entire town's needs, prioritize the needs, and the Council spent money, time and effort and approved a master plan for the Common.

She understands the big project was considered by the Council in 2021 and was not approved to fund the restoration of the field. Therefore, she is concerned about the growth of this project and managing expectations. The drainage fund is committed to provide funding for Winship Bridge that they hope to get reimbursed for, but there are many needs for drainage, and staff needs to look at this and return to the Council before the Council settles on this project.



She is happy to ask the school to contribute and noted they have contributed to some special projects the Town has had such as the backstop, and in turn, the Town has contributed funding towards school project such as the recent refurbishment of the gym floors. Staff can ask about that, ask about the bond from 2011, and then as part of the budget workshop, the Council or staff could bring up a larger renovation and see how it competes with the other proposed capital projects.

Mayor Kircher said it sounds reasonable and hopefully they will get something that comes together, and recognized Council support.

Town Manager Johnson said she will tell Ms. Batella that the Council is interested in a project but it is contingent upon how much funding is raised and hopefully, they will be wildly successful.

### **End of Administrative Agenda.**

### **Public Hearing on Planning Projects – Part 2.**

#### **15. Natalie Coffin Greene Park, Design Review and Town Council adoption of Resolution No. 2439 approving the project, subject to conditions.**

Town of Ross, Natalie Coffin Greene Park, A.P. No. 073-211-28, Zoning: C-D Civic District, General Plan: Public Park and Open Space, Flood Zone: X (Moderate to Low Risk).

**Project Summary:** The applicant is requesting approval for Design Review to construct three new prefabricated steel truss bridges to replace the old wooden bridges in Natalie Coffin Greene Park.

Public Works Director Rich Simonitch gave the staff report and overview of the request for design review to construct three new prefabricated steel truss bridges to replace the old wooden bridge in Natalie Coffin Green Park. He provided background, noting there was unanimous support from the ADR group that the project is consistent with the purpose of design review. He then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the project.

Staff recommends the Council adopt Resolution No. 2439 approving design review to construct three new prefabricated steel truss bridges at Natalie Coffin Greene Park.

Council Member Salter asked and confirmed staff has not been able to get the actual samples but forwarded several locations where these materials are available. Staff did not receive any feedback, and ADR members said they would go out and look at the samples.

Council Member Robbins said there was a concern that the color is too orange, and she confirmed that Mr. Simonitch reviewed the color, visited Rohnert Park and looked at the weathered steel which is more consistent with the pictures he displayed tonight, and confirmed it is a darker weathered look and not bright orange.

Mayor Kircher opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

**Council Member Dowling moved and Mayor Pro Tem McMillan to adopt Resolution No. 2439 approving Design Review to construct three new prefabricated steel truss bridges to replace the old wooden bridges in Natalie Coffin Greene Park. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

**End of Public Hearing on Planning Projects – Part 2.**

**16. No Action Items: (Mayor)**

- a. **Council Correspondence** – None.
- b. **Future Council Items** – Councilmember Salter asked if the Town Manager could provide details on the pedestrian that was killed. Town Manager Johnson said she could not, as it is still under investigation. Council Member Salter recommended a future item regarding improvements for road safety and Mayor Pro Tem McMillan recommended waiting for the results of the investigation before undertaking this discussion.


**17. Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.



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C. William Kircher, Jr., Mayor

**ATTEST:**



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Cyndie Martel, Town Clerk